

LIVERPOOL ANARCHIST

≡ Issue IV

Free Newsletter

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The Conservative Party have taken power over the law-making body of the State for the next several years. So we must expect the hard times to continue, and most likely worsen. Yet, we cannot give in to feelings of doom or powerlessness. The real relations of society, and the rebellion of the defiant, are not determined by the course of party politics.

On the other hand, we cannot jump into the same old mindless and frantic activism, which burns people up like fuel without even approaching the comprehensive social transformation we so desire. Now's the time, I believe, to find a way out of the malaise we find ourselves in. And this will require critical reflection and resolute action in equal parts.

Where to begin? One issue so clearly setting us back is the old problem of survival.

"The need for physical survival is one of the strongest and most reasonable arguments there is, and today, it is the State that guarantees people's survival. [...] Up against a prison society, anarchism will not be spread with better or more propaganda. It will spread if it can exercise force against the dominant structures, if it can put into practice – at least in a limited way – its ideas, and if these ideas

are applicable to people's daily lives." (Josep Gardeneys, 'A Wager on the Future')

Feminist collectives, unions, permaculture projects, tenant's associations, mental wellbeing support circles, self-defence training, food not bombs, mutual childcare, free schools, radical housing co-ops, squats and social centres. All this and more can help us to survive, while posing alternatives to the dominant order – so long as they do not allow themselves to be isolated from society at large.

But we can't settle for mere survival, keeping our heads above water, in order to go on producing and consuming, dutifully perpetuating our own alienation and exploitation. We want to really live, a desire that reaches beyond everything this society has to offer. We are struggling to destroy the present condition and discover something that is intimately *other*. This tension is expressed through class struggle, social war, permanent conflict with the ideological and material power of those who would rule over us. It is only within this context that mutual aid and alternative projects become truly *subversive*.

Somewhere between patience and panic, righteousness and resignation, there lies a way forward. •

The People's Kitchen

Every third Friday of the month there is a communal meal at Next to Nowhere, Bold Street. It's a chance for everyone to share a vegan meal, outside of the pressures of the commercial highstreet. Most of the food would be thrown out if it wasn't for the meal, and there is no profiteering involved. Everything is pay as you feel, and there is no need to be put off if that means paying nothing at all. You can always help out in other ways like washing up. The next one is on the 17th at 6.30, so why not pop along? •

In the Blind Spots

Digital devices are now a constant presence in our lives. What we are doing, who we are connected with, and our way of thinking are increasingly codified in ones and zeros, collected and circulated by the software and internet services we use. Leeching off this digital world are the institutions of social control - whether that be the government agency spying on potential enemies, or the corporate department manipulating our desires in pursuit of profit. A climate of fear and paranoia begins to cast its shadow, in which we police our own behaviours, and limit our own possibilities.

In reality, this shadow is cast by a very limited, inefficient, and easy to evade apparatus. A little

bit of awareness, and the use of a few basic counter-measures are all that is needed to get on with our lives, and our resistance, without being paralysed by fear or paranoia. On the other hand, it is not something to be careless about, especially if you are at risk of state repression.

Some basic recommendations:

- Use a linux Operating System (Kubuntu is good for those used to Windows; Qubes for optimum security).
- Use a VPN or TOR for internet browsing.
- Encrypt your hard-drive.
- Use end-to-end encrypted communications (such as Signal for instant messaging, and PGP for emails).
- Avoid proprietary social networks (such as Facebook) or use a false name and photo if necessary.

To learn about these, and much more, take a look at these websites:

- The privacy subreddit's FAQ is a good place to start:
[reddit.com/r/privacy/wiki/index](https://www.reddit.com/r/privacy/wiki/index)
- The EFF's Surveillance Self-Defence website provides information and technical guides:
[ssd.eff.org](https://www.eff.org)
- PrivacyTools is an excellent website for finding software and service providers:
privacytools.io



A movement of insurrection against neoliberal misery continues to grip Chile: "Today, everything is possible."

A Lesson in Freedom

"A school run by children, parents and teachers together, without a headmaster, centralised authority or the usual hierarchies." This was how John Ord, one of the founders of Scotland Road Free School described the experiment when he and another local teacher began a radical educational project in Liverpool's Scotland Road in 1971.

The school's founders were inspired by the progressive educational philosophies of thinkers like John Dewey and Francisco Ferrer, but this wasn't an academic research project. They were deeply dissatisfied with the state system and its suppression of individuality, so set about putting radical ideas directly into practice in the deprived working class community that they were part of. They knew children were being failed and so didn't wait for approval or funding but got started quickly with around 5 students. It was, as Ord put it, "education in the community, by the community".

Lessons and even attendance were optional, but the school grew as its reputation spread, attracting more and more local children as well as adults who were interested in what was being attempted. Children dictated what they did with their time, under the supervision and guidance of unpaid 'helpers' – ex teachers, but also trade unionists, parents and community activists. At its peak the school had around 30-40 regular students, many of whom might otherwise have been absent or excluded for kicking back against their school's rules and structures. By embracing the individuality that the state system suppressed, the school allowed the children to be at the centre of their own learning experience, where they should be. There was a strong focus on introducing them to new places and experiences, meaning a lot of the budget (which came solely from community donations and the dole money that some adults claimed) was spent on trips. After rent and food costs there was little or no money left for resources and the school's existence was always precarious.

When The Free School was forced to close a few years later, the engrained conservatism of the state education system came into full effect and

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CRAVES.



-EMMA GOLDMAN

barred adults (including qualified teachers) and children who had been a part of the Free School from re-entering the state system. The radical experimental approach that frightened the education system at that time is still a fairly rare example, at least in the UK. Any significant step towards a freer, more progressive approach is seen as a huge risk to a child's development, even in today's context where the mainstream education system is failing so many young people, mainly because it still practices many of the same archaic, oppressive methods that were around in the 1970s and before.

The Scotland Road Free School succeeded for a few years at doing things differently and breaking with this authoritative tradition. Maybe the most important lesson that everyone was constantly involved in was about working out how to accept freedom in education and discover what it really means. In a 1970s interview, John Ord suggested, "they are finding out what freedom means, they're finding out that it means looking at a situation, realising that other people exist, accepting that they exist and doing what you want to do regarding their existence; in other words without harming them". A pretty anarchist starting point if you ask me. •

EVENTS THIS JANUARY

4th – Fuck the Tories Street Rave Protest, Church Street at 13:00

17th – People's Kitchen communal meal at Next to Nowhere, Bold Street, 18.30

“We live in an inverted reality. To get back on our feet depends on ourselves, on our ability to build a true community of struggle against the monopoly of money and death. Let's affirm its existence in deeds, here and now, directly appropriating everything we have built.

To do that we need no leader: we have demonstrated that the mass of the living speaks louder and clearer than any leader. Let's rebel against the economic totalitarianism that keeps us in misery, cultivating forms of mutual aid beyond money and the State.”

~ Communique from the Chilean uprising.

LOCAL GROUPS

- ♦ Food not Bombs meet every Tuesday at Next to Nowhere from 4pm
- ♦ Hunt Saboteurs at lpoolhuntsabs@hotmail.co.uk or Facebook @LiverpoolHuntSabs
- ♦ Louder than Proud [queer collective] at louderthanproud@protonmail.com
- ♦ Merseyside Anarchists at merseysideanarchists@riseup.net
- ♦ Merseyside Animal Rights Campaigns on Facebook @MARcampaigns
- ♦ Merseyside Anti-Fascist Network on Facebook @MerseyAFN
- ♦ Solidarity Federation [anarcho-syndicalist initiative] at liverpoolsolfed@gmail.com

We aim to publish the *Liverpool Anarchist* monthly, and welcome all submissions in line with the following principles:

- ◊ *Anti-State*
- ◊ *Anti-Capitalist*
- ◊ *Intersectional*

Send in feedback, comments, and submissions to:

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